

**§ 46.30 Definitions.**

For purposes of this part, the following definitions supplement terms defined at 40 CFR parts 1500–1508.

*Adaptive management* is a system of management practices based on clearly identified outcomes and monitoring to determine whether management actions are meeting desired outcomes; and, if not, facilitating management changes that will best ensure that outcomes are met or re-evaluated. Adaptive management recognizes that knowledge about natural resource systems is sometimes uncertain.

*Bureau* means bureau, office, service, or survey within the Department of the Interior.

*Community-based training* in the NEPA context is the training of local participants together with Federal participants in the workings of the environmental planning effort as it relates to the local community(ies).

*Controversial* refers to circumstances where a substantial dispute exists as to the environmental consequences of the proposed action and does not refer to the existence of opposition to a proposed action, the effect of which is relatively undisputed.

*Environmental Statement Memoranda (ESM)* are a series of instructions issued by the Department's Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance to provide information and explanatory guidance in the preparation, completion, and circulation of NEPA documents.

*Environmentally preferable alternative* is the alternative required by 40 CFR 1505.2(b) to be identified in a record of decision (ROD), that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment and best protects, preserves, and enhances historical, cultural, and natural resources. The environmentally preferable alternative is identified upon consideration and weighing by the Responsible Official of long-term environmental impacts against short-term impacts in evaluating what is the best protection of these resources. In some situations, such as when different alternatives impact different resources to different degrees, there may be more than one environmentally preferable alternative.

*No action alternative.*

(1) This term has two interpretations. First “no action” may mean “no change” from a current management direction or level of management intensity (*e.g.*, if no ground-disturbance is currently underway, no action means no ground-disturbance). Second “no action” may mean “no project” in cases where a new project is proposed for implementation.

(2) The Responsible Official must determine the “no action” alternative consistent with one of the definitions in paragraph (1) of this definition and appropriate to the proposed action to be analyzed in an environmental impact statement. The no action alternative looks at effects of not approving the action under consideration.

*Proposed action.* This term refers to the bureau activity under consideration. It includes the bureau's exercise of discretion over a non-Federal entity's planned activity that falls under a Federal agency's authority to issue permits, licenses, grants, rights-of-way, or other common Federal approvals, funding, or regulatory instruments. The proposed action:

(1) Is not necessarily, but may become, during the NEPA process, the bureau preferred alternative or (in a record of decision for an environmental impact statement, in accordance with 40 CFR 1505.2) an environmentally preferable alternative; and

(2) Must be clearly described in order to proceed with NEPA analysis.

*Reasonably foreseeable future actions* include those federal and non-federal activities not yet undertaken, but sufficiently likely to occur, that a Responsible Official of ordinary prudence would take such activities into account in reaching a decision. These federal and non-federal activities that must be taken into account in the analysis of cumulative impact include, but are not limited to, activities for which there are existing decisions, funding, or proposals identified by the bureau. Reasonably foreseeable future actions do not include those actions that are highly speculative or indefinite.

*Responsible Official* is the bureau employee who is delegated the authority to make and implement a decision on a proposed action and is responsible for ensuring compliance with NEPA.